



## CAPE REGION LIFE

Thu, Aug 27, 2009

### Inmates help change the colors at Rehoboth Elementary

By Ryan Mavity

When students return to Rehoboth Elementary School next month, they will be surprised to see the school has received a facelift – and it's come from an unlikely source.

The school is being washed in new colors by a group working to change theirs: cadets from the Sussex Boot Camp.

The boot camp, which houses 100 offenders from all over the state on the grounds of Sussex Correctional Institution in Georgetown, is a six-month, military-style program that teaches discipline through a regimented routine of exercise, education, substance abuse treatment and community service.

Principal Trish Mumford said, "We were able to get these people to come and do a ton of work here that we would not be able to afford to hire out to be done. The building has a new, bright look, different colors. The cadets who come are respectful. The boot camp has worked hand in hand with us so well. It has worked really well."

Mumford said the cadets spent the past month painting five classrooms, four bathrooms, three stairwells and main lobby and are now working on the cafeteria. The only cost to the school district has been the paint supplies – paint, rollers and brushes. The downstairs cafeteria is being painted in the school colors, yellow and blue.

Maj. Marvin Hennessy, commander of the boot camp, said, "It gives them a sense of pride and also is a learning experience for them to learn some job skills, because this is a reentry program. They learn some valuable skills so they can obtain some gainful employment when they get out."

Hennessy said offenders can get into boot camp by volunteering for it, being sentenced to it by the court or having a sentence modified to be diverted to boot camp.

Offenders sent to boot camp are typically at the end of their sentences, usually for drug or robbery offenses. Hennessy said the program does not take sex offenders or violent criminals, and to be eligible, an inmate cannot be sentenced to more than five years of incarceration.



**CISM Boot Camp**

5 Day CISM Training Boot Camp. Volunteering for Best Boot Camp. ILT Training IntenseSchool

“We assess all their history before I put them out in the community. If I don’t feel they are a good risk, I don’t put them out – they work inside the prison,” Hennessy said.

Much like their counterparts in the military, the cadets have a highly regimented daily routine.

Lt. Frank Wright said a typical day for the cadets starts at 5:15 a.m. They get dressed and go out for an hour of exercise. After breakfast, there is an on-line inspection before the cadets go to classes or work detail. Classes go until 8 p.m. and the cadets are then allowed an hour of personal time before going to bed at 9:30.

The school project is nothing new for the cadets, who have done similar work at H.O. Brittingham Elementary School and Cape Henlopen High School.

Tyrone Woodyard, plant operations specialist for Cape Henlopen School District, said, “They’ve always been right there for us. The manpower alone has been a great asset for us.”

Cadet Howard Bailey was placed into the program nearly six months ago in lieu of doing time.

He said the elementary school project was the largest project he’s worked on since he’s been in boot camp. Bailey has 45 days of boot camp remaining.

He said the program has taught him time management, organization skills and respect. “I get to put back into the community some of the things I was taking out by doing some of the things I was doing on the street,” he said.

---

[Comment](#)

---

[To top](#)

Search CapeGazette.com

BEACH PAPER

Cape Gazette

© Cape Gazette. All rights reserved. [Policy Statement](#)